1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandwa* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandwa*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasanar to Bhairamgarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

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226 564 markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *pash-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes or reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in [501] managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty [651] charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in [501] shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in [374] broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

226 The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

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stones; the platform is thus sloped against the stream, and small fish coming down are unable to get through the meshes of the wicker-work, and are thrown by the water high and dry on to the downstream end of the platform; this is merely an elaboration of the *dandar* trap regularly made in the plains by other Koitor at corners of rice-fields where there is any considerable fall in the level of a main irrigation current. 226

The Bison-horn Marias have four or five different kinds of nets, and field fish traps of three or four kinds varying in size from the big field *dandar* above to the *bisar*, a small cylindrical trap of reeds or canes fastened together with wefts of cord, with inverted cones of similar construction inside; the narrow mouth at one end of the trap is fixed close to a small hole made through the embankment of a flooded rice field, and the small fry washed through the hole into the trap cannot escape through the cones. Women make a series of small mud dams across the swampy ends of tanks or pools, and dry out the space enclosed by each dam in turn by throwing the water out with winnows or baskets; they then collect what fish are left in the mud.

In the north of the State the Bhattras, Parjas, Murias and low-caste Hindus always precede the ceremonial eating of new mangoes at Aktai, the local name for the Hindu festival of Akshya Trittya, which falls usually in the second fortnight of April, by a ceremonial *parad* for fish; their general method is for all the men to go into the forest to gather the leaves, roots and fruits used for poisoning fish, then to poison the selected and previously dammed rivulet or small tank; after the stupefied fish have been collected and divided, each family cooks and eats the fish with the new mangoes, and the head of the family goes to the source of their usual water-supply and offers water in a new *handi* with a little grain in the name of the ancestors. In Gondi this is called the ceremony of *' Yer upihana pen hanal '* (offering water to the clan-god and the Departed). Some Bison-horn Marias observe this practice also before their own Marka Pandum, or New Mango Festival, but they prefer having a real beat for fish to poisoning pools, though both they and the Hill Marias frequently poison pools. But most Bison-horn Marias beat for fish at all times of the year, except the rains, when there is too much water, just for sport, and join for this with villagers of other castes, such as Jhari Telanga, Halba or Parja. As many as fifty or sixty square-meshed nets are collected, about four feet deep, and the bottoms of the nets are weighted with stones, while pieces of wood are fastened on the top edge to act as floats. Before the nets are arranged in the water, the *perma* (village priest or spiritual headman, corresponding in Bison-horn villages to the 226 769 226

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●226 Hill Maria *kasyep-gaita*) of the village where the beat is to take place sets up a small bough of *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) or *jamela* (*Eugenia heyneana*) on the bank of the river, beneath which he places an egg and a little husked *kutki* in an egg shell, and prays to *Jalkanya*, the Water-maiden, for good fishing; if the beat is successful, the *perma* after it is over breaks the egg and spills the yoke and the *kutki* on the ground in her name. The nets are lowered into the water tied together in a long line across the river, with side-nets (*kanasi*) at right angles on both sides of the main net towards the line of beaters, if the river is too wide or there is much water near the banks too shallow for the main net to be stretched from bank to bank. A line of men stands behind the nets, and three or four hundred yards away the beaters form a line across the river from bank to bank, and advance towards the line of nets, beating the water with hands, sticks and bamboos, and shouting and beating drums. The fish are divided up in the village, the *perma* and *peda* and those who have provided nets getting double shares; if a tank is beaten, the owner of the tank gets a double share. These beats are at times quite exciting and the catch is heavy, as shown by the following account of an eyewitness, Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell:—

'On Christmas Day 1921 we were encamped at Salnar, a village on the banks of the Indrawati about nine miles from Barsur. The river here is only 3½ or 4 feet deep, and breaks up into two streams divided by a sand spit. The surroundings are beautiful, with a clear view of the Korekal Mad waterfall seven or eight miles away. The river was ideal for the fishing *parad*, which began early in the morning and lasted till sundown, with a short break for a midday meal. We spent the whole day on the sand spit, watching the great catches of fish. The people of this locality are Bison-horn Marias, and the method of the *parad* was very like that of an ordinary beat for game; a main net about 15 yards wide was sunk across the river upstream, its bottom weighted with stones and the ends tied with cords to enable it to be lifted, while some ten men held the top. From the ends of the net other cords, to which were fastened at every few inches bunches of dry palm leaves and stone weights, were strung out by men in dug-out canoes in a semi-circle for 30 or 40 yards on each side, and placed in charge of stops aligned from one end to the other of each string; the task of these stops was slowly to draw in the strings towards the main net after the beat had begun, and so keep the fish within a circumscribed area. The main line of beaters numbered about twenty, each armed with a small triangular net fastened on a triangle of stout sticks, with a fourth stick fastened at the apex as a handle. Behind them a second line of beaters, but fewer in number, followed at a distance of two yards, carrying triangular nets of the same type but without handles. As the first line beaters advanced they held their nets in front of them under the water by the handles, while those in the second line advanced with their nets held straight out in front of them and against their bodies. The object of the front line was only to drive the fish forward into the main net, and to sweep up with their own nets any fish which might try to rush back at the end of the beat; the second line had to be on the look out for any fish which might jump clear over the backs of the front line when collared in their nets. It was only the large fish, generally mahseer, which when backing from the main net to meet the nets of the front line beaters jumped clear out of the water towards the second line. It was really wonderful to watch the dexterity

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with which the second line dealt with these fish, some of which weighed from ten to fifteen pounds, and required all the handling that the men were capable of; even then many were dropped from sheer weight. In all, more than 300 fish, of all sizes, were caught in the day, enough to provide ample food for a week for everyone present. The Marias were delighted.'

For poisoning fish all or some of the following[1] are used:— *korkoti* (3, 5) leaves and twigs; fruit of the *masiya* (1), *kirach* (1) (*Cassaria graveolens*), *kothewa* (1), *pendra* (1) (*Randia uliginosa*), *kotma* (3), *iriya* (5), *waza* (5) or *vachcha* (5), and *kue* (6) (*Randia dumetorum*); roots of the *sirindi* (1, 2), *agya* (1, 3, 4) (*Millettia auriculata*), *korti* (1), *timra* (1, 2) (root-bark), *hewu* (5) (pounded with earth from a white-ant hill), *kumbhi* (1, 5) (root-bark; *Careya arborea*), *tumsi* (5), *basemati* (6), and *batte* (6); bark of the *karra* (1, 3, 6) or *karla*, *kirangi* (4), *kuchali* (5) (*Strychnos nux vomica*) and *muchi-tumri*[2] (5) (*Diospyros montana*), *kodra-marra* (6) and *chil*[3] (6); and the ground oil-cake (1, 5, 6) made from *tora*, the seeds of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*).

The ingredients are pounded together with stones or axe-heads on a rock in or near the pool or tank; if the water is deep, they are thrown into it the night before the fish are collected; if it is shallow, the poisons act in an hour or two and can safely be thrown into the water in the morning. The fish are stupefied by them, and are easily collected floating on the surface.

In the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and Konta tahsil, Bison-horn Marias and others have night beats for fish in the hot weather; they call the beats '*chingra parad*' and '*hola parad*'. The late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh gave the following description of these:—

'The beat must be held on a dark moonless night, and not in a tank or a small nullah or in water flowing over mud which would be stirred up by the feet of the beaters, but in clear shallow water flowing over sand or shingle, not more than thigh-deep. Four or five men enter the water carrying each a bamboo torch, and a basket; the torch is held not more than a foot above

[1] The numbers 1 to 6 stand for lists of poisons supplied from 1, Jagdalpur; 2, Sukma; 3, Kondagaon; 4, Dantewara; 5, Konta; and 6, Bijapur. There is almost certainly some duplication owing to the different names prevailing in different parts of Bastar for the same plants. Bastar plant names so differ from those in the Central Provinces that identification is difficult without sending actual specimens to Dehra Dun. The Central Provinces forest lists give as known fish poisons roots of *Millettia auriculata*, fruit of *Cassaria graveolens*, *Cassaria tomentosa* and *Randia dumetorum*, bark of *Ougeinia dalbergioides*, and leaves and bark of *Cleistanthus collinus*. *Strychnos nux vomica* and *Diospyros montana* are well known as poisonous plants.

[2] *Muchi-tumri* is possibly the same as *timra* in lists 1 and 2.

[3] *Chil*, which occurs only in the Bijapur list, may be the Telugu word *chil* for *Strychnos potatorum*, the clearing nut. The seeds of this are used for clearing muddy water.

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226 the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the baskets.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

273 The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When [272] fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance 757 already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly 534 used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

273 The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

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There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.'
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill.
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields. 226

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kurangra*, *ndri* (or *bilmi*), *kots* (or *khoka*), *dandwa*, *lawa* (or *turu*) and *bigwa*. 825 821 614

The gall-bladder of the *bigwa* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kusra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink. 278

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 227 226

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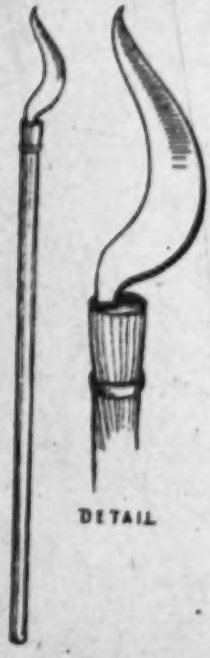
Muria

241 they still make a small *parha* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *galhār* is a low-lying rice field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]



DETAIL

FIG. 4. York used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3′ 10″

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

[226] [184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before threshing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *kura* threshing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1890), pp. 113 and 141.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and
[278] stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
● 226 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
524 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 108ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

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They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally 825
that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps 821
into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem 614
of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kawangra*, *nāri* (or *bāwi*), *bote* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *lowe* (or *turu*) and *bāgum*.

The gall-bladder of the *bāgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake- 278
bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink.

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a 227
hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 226

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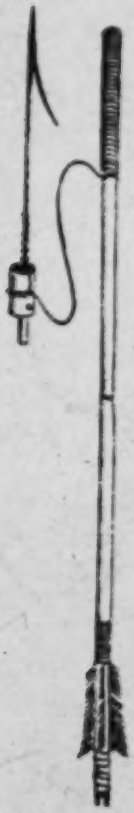
worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.



Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *tāngra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *mānder* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *jalna* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundka* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *talai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundka*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *otād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:

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FIG. 12. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21'

Thāpa re thāpa, māchh māriya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gāon cho laka manke, bāts nenwe chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chadiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

[1] This trap resembles the Finland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Finland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two cones of pointed sticks called inchins in Worcester and chairs in Finland. Chair is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 176 and 1936, p. 179.

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times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long.

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, *'Netānch korinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: 'It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election

[1] R. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Keya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 32.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate XVIII

Chelik at Tamrugaon fishing with rod and line from a specially prepared pier

Chelik setting dandia and dandar traps in a small stream

[p. 66 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Dasru of Markabera with his chargod net

[p. 78 (2)]

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Plate XX

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Chelik at Koilibera fishing with a net

Boys setting a sonūri trap in the River Kotri

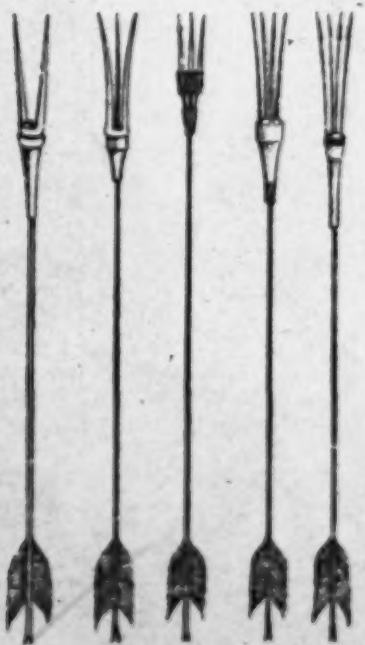
[P, 78 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there 796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787 and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(*Length about 3'*)

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described